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MRS. JOHN BACON (ELIZABETH GOLDTHWAITE)

JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY

COURTESY OF THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM

## TWO COPLEY PORTRAITS

**T**HE two very interesting portraits by Copley reproduced herewith were exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum last winter. One was a loan, the other a purchase. Both were painted in what was considered Copley's best period, about 1770, five years perhaps before he sailed for England and Italy never to return.

As examples of Copley's works and of early portrait painting in America these

two pictures are of extraordinary significance. The reproductions were first presented in the Brooklyn Museum's *Quarterly* from which with permission we quote the following delightful descriptions:

"The subject of the first portrait, Elizabeth Goldthwaite (Mrs. John Bacon) was the wife of Rev. John Bacon, a pastor of the Old South Church, Boston. Her portrait shows a small erect woman, trim



MRS. BEN DAVIS (ANSTICE GREENLEAF)

JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY

COURTESY OF THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM

in figure and of straight, clear-cut features, seated sideways, the head slightly turned to face the painter. A strong light plays upon the face and bust, making a marked contrast between the raven hair and dark, keenly observant eyes and the clear pale skin through which shows a soft warm flush. Heavy shadows on the less lighted parts of the head are characteristically used by Copley to enhance the contrast and

center the interest upon the face of the sitter. A dainty lace cap is on the head; a twisted rope of pearls coils about the neck; the bodice is a soft warm gray, a scarf of exquisite Mechlin lace covers the bosom; the sleeves are short and the fore-arms and one hand are shown. Especially to be noted is the accuracy and justness of the tones of the flesh showing through the lace covering the bosom. It is the per-

fection of art. A certain solid quality there is about all the brushwork very satisfying to the critic. The strong lighting used by Copley is in accord with his own advice to Pelham, 'I would have you very careful to preserve as much as possible broad lights and shadows, only turn the face so that it shall be all aluminated or as much so as possible.' In this painting more than in the other there is a keen searching for truth and the character of the subject. The color is warm, especially in the flesh-tones and the dress, and one finds none of the cold grays and blues which often appeared in his earlier portraits. A minister's wife, calm, thoughtful, somewhat severe, a gentlewoman certainly, Copley has truthfully painted. As a critic of that day said of another of his portraits, 'It will be flesh and blood these 200 years to come.'

"Quite in another vein Anstice Greenleaf (Mrs. Ben Davis) is painted. She was the daughter of Stephen Greenleaf, sheriff of Boston, in early Revolutionary days, and is distinguished and handsome, the woman of the world, a patrician conscious of her beauty's power. Less 'aluminated' is the face, the hair dusky, the eyes dark and sparkling. The edge of the hair upon the

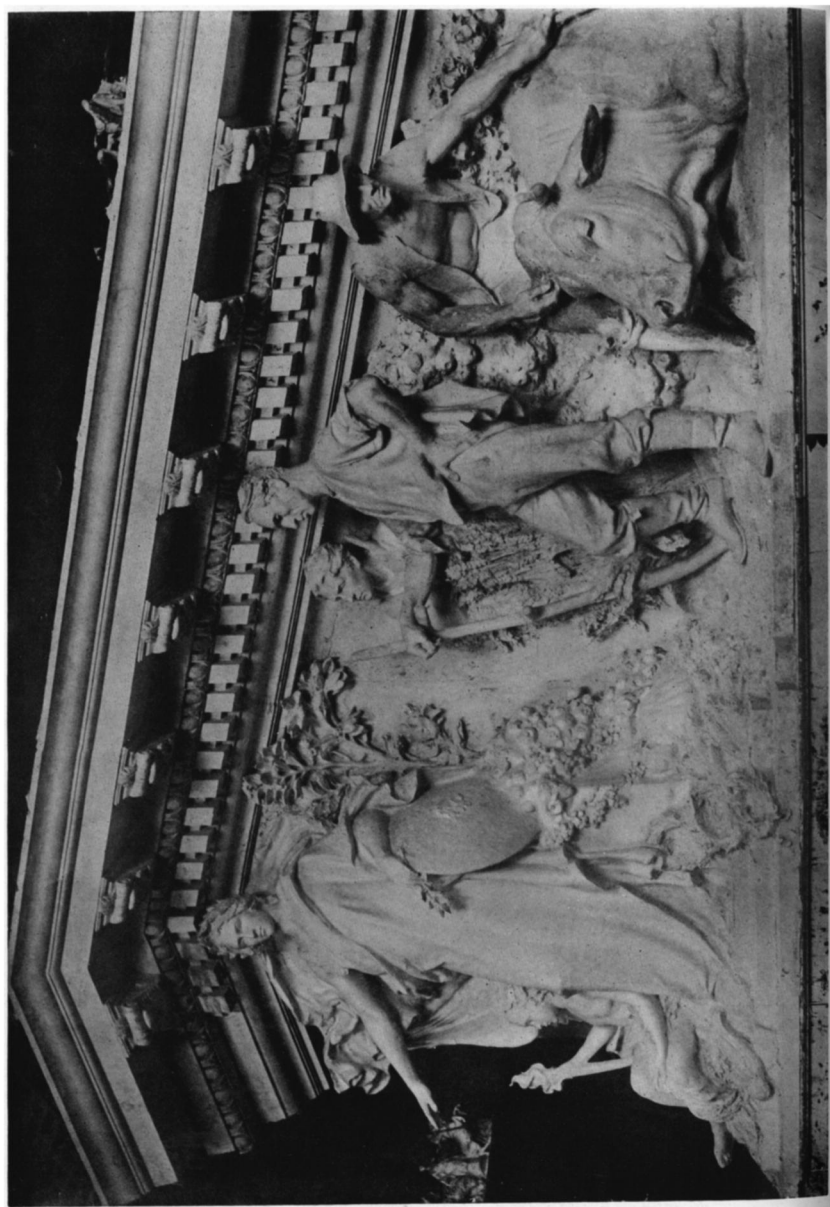
forehead is studied with accuracy. The shoulders slope in the manner peculiar, it would seem, to Copley's day and possibly exaggerated by him. The bodice, low cut, is of a very delicate pearly gray and from the short sleeves barely reaching the elbow, pushes out spotless fluffy lawn. Pearls are twisted in the hair-band, the sleeves below the shoulders and crossing the bosom are knotted to loop up a scarf or shawl of soft brown. A collarette of fine lace circles the neck close under the chin. Refinement and breeding, pride of birth show in the sitter's carriage. There is warmth and beauty of grays and browns and blacks in the color tones. With a subject, almost beautiful in a conventional sense, Copley though portraying her with freer brushwork and in lighter mood than in the Bacon portrait, does not fail to express her individuality and personality with an honesty rare among the English painters of that day. His love for the elegances of life, delicate tones in dress, pearls, spotless lawn and lace found its pleasure in the painting of Anstice Greenleaf; no painter, unless it be some of the reality-loving Dutchmen, presented such objects more truthfully."

Both are very fine examples.



GREAT DANE

EDWARD FIELD SANFORD. JR.



PORTION OF PEDIMENT FOR THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL AT WASHINGTON. BY PAUL W. BARTLETT



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